

Agenda Item: 4
Meeting Date: April 13, 2006

CALIFORNIA BAY-DELTA AUTHORITY

LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT

Summary: Recent Science Program Activities

Lead Scientist Recruitment Update

The lead scientist recruitment initiated in the fall of 2005 was unsuccessful and has now been closed. Currently the Science Program is working with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to identify an interim candidate to serve after Johnnie Moore's term ends June 30, 2006. With the assistance of the Selection Panel, the Science Program will resume recruitment efforts to fill the Lead Scientist position once the uncertainty surrounding the restructuring of California Bay-Delta Authority has passed; and the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's vision, direction, funding and organizational structure is better defined.

Review and Technical Panels Update

1) Interagency Ecological Program's (IEP) Pelagic Organism Decline (POD)

Investigations: The Science Program-sponsored independent external review of IEP's investigation of POD in the Delta is available on the Science Program website at http://science.calwater.ca.gov/workshop/workshop_pod.shtml. The panel's report is based on the IEP's POD Investigation 2005 results and draft 2006 work plan presented at a public workshop in November 2005. In January the IEP Directors approved the final 2006 work plan, which included revisions based on the review panel report. The Science Program is considering the panel's recommendations in identifying priorities for its 2006 focused research solicitation and Science Fellows Program. The Science Program and IEP POD group are currently developing a Joint Response to the 2005 POD review. The Joint Response document is targeted for completion by May 2006 when it will be posted on the Science Program website.

2) Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP) Biological Opinion: At the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) request, the Science Program organized an independent review of the scientific information used to support the 2004 Biological Opinion regarding the coordinated OCAP for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project. A public workshop was held in October 2005. The review panel presented its final report at public workshop January 30, 2006. The review panel's report and the response from NMFS are available on the Science Program website at http://science.calwater.ca.gov/workshop/workshop_ocap.shtml.

3) Environmental Water Account (EWA): EWA agency biologists and Science Program held a public workshop in December 2005 on the 2005 EWA water acquisitions and allocations, focusing on the issues of EWA export effects on delta smelt and other sensitive fish populations and addressing how this information would affect EWA operations in 2006. Although this event was not a full-fledged annual program review, four members from the EWA Review Panel participated in the technical workshop and their review comments are available on the Science Program website at <http://science.calwater.ca.gov/workshop/ewa.shtml>.

4) CALSIM II: A final report is now available for the Science Review of the new San Joaquin River Valley representations in CALSIM II model. The review was commissioned by the Science Program, in collaboration with the California Water and Environmental Modeling Forum (CWEMF) and other agencies, to provide an independent analysis and recommendations about the strengths and weaknesses of the new simulations. The review panel presented its findings in a public workshop January 2006, and the complete report is now available on the Science Program website: http://science.calwater.ca.gov/workshop/calsim_05.shtml

5) Delta Science Panel: The Science Program convened a technical panel to consider the current scientific understanding of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and to prepare a report that will be used to help develop a long-term Delta vision. The panel will review, summarize and synthesize information developed by the CALFED Program's science boards, other pertinent literature, and input from other Delta science experts when needed. The report is expected to complement and inform Delta vision discussions among stakeholders and policy makers. The panel's draft report will be presented publicly in May and completed by May 15, 2006.

6) Online Journal: The latest issue of San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science (Volume 4 Issue 1) is available at <http://repositories.cdlib.org/jmie/sfews/>. The issue covers topics relevant to resource management questions from modeling of copper contamination, development of new plant distribution database (CalJep), to investigations of dam effects on the Central Valley steelhead population and disease in juvenile Chinook salmon.

7) Upcoming Focused Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) and Science Fellows: The Science Program is currently working on the 2006 PSP and Science Fellows solicitations. Based on funding limitations and concerns about timeliness and responsiveness to high priorities, the Lead Scientist and Science Program staff have streamlined the previous PSP processes and focused the efforts on implementing agency priorities, while maintaining competitive and scientifically credible processes. Cross-program knowledge gaps and management needs will be identified based on input from participants in and products from recent and ongoing public efforts such as the IEP POD Synthesis Report and Workplan Review, EWA Technical Workshop, Technical Review of the Biological Opinion of the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, Mercury workshop, Delta Science Panel, and

Delta Risk Management Strategy. The Lead Scientist and staff will refine these topics into reasonable research questions well suited to the PSP or Fellows Program. The revised process was presented for discussion at the February 21, 2006 Agency Coordination Team (ACT) meeting and March 15, 2006 Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC) meeting. The BDPAC staff report on the priorities and process for the upcoming Science Program focused PSP and Science Fellows solicitations is available at

<http://calwater.ca.gov/BDPAC/BDPACSupportingMeetingMaterials 3-15-06.shtml>.

8) Call for Abstracts—4th BIENNIAL CALFED SCIENCE CONFERENCE: Making Sense of Complexity: Science for a Changing Environment: The Science Program would like to encourage submission of abstracts for the 4th Biennial CALFED Science Conference to be held October 23-25, 2006 at the Sacramento Convention Center. The Science Conference is a forum for presenting scientific information and ideas relevant to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's goals and objectives and features both oral and poster presentations. The organizing committee welcomes abstracts for oral, poster, special session and poster cluster presentations. The absolute submission deadline is June 2, 2006. For more information on Conference themes, submission information, and registration please visit the conference website:

<http://science.calwater.ca.gov/conferences/conferences.shtml> .

List of Attachments

None

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